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AN

APOLOGY

FOR

TALES OF TERROR.

—A THING OF SHREDS AND PATCHES.

Hamlet.

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*Gift of
Ernest B. Dane*

THE ERL-KING.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

Author of the "SORROWS OF WERTER."

[It is necessary the Reader should be informed, that in the legends of German superstition, certain mischievous Spirits are supposed to preside over the different Elements, and to amuse themselves with inflicting calamities on Man. One of these is termed the WATER-KING, another the FIRE-KING, and a third the CLOUD-KING. The Hero of the present piece is the ERL OF OAK-KING—a Fiend who is supposed to dwell in the recesses of the forest, and thence to issue forth upon the benighted traveller to lure him to his destruction.]

O! who rides by night thro' the woodlands so wild?
It is the fond Father embracing his Child;
And close the Boy nestles within his lov'd arm,
From the blast of the tempest to keep himself warm.

"O Father! see yonder, see yonder!" he says.

"My Boy, upon what dost thou fearfully gaze?"

"O! 'tis the ERL-KING, with his staff and his shroud!"

"No, my Love! it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

[THE PHANTOM SPEAKS.]

"O! wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest Child!

"By many gay sports shall thy hours be beguil'd;

"My Mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,

"And many a fine flow'r shall she pluck for my Boy."

"O Father! my Father! and did you not hear,

"The ERL-KING whisper so close in my ear?"

"Be still my lov'd Darling, my Child be at ease!

"It was but the wild blast as it howl'd thro' the trees."

[THE PHANTOM.]

"O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest Boy!

"My Daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;

"She shall bear thee so lightly thro' wet and thro' wild,

"And hug thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my Child."

"O Father! my Father! and saw you not plain

"The ERL-KING's pale daughter glide past thro' the rain?"

"O no, my heart's treasure! I knew it full soon,

"It was the Grey Willow that danc'd to the Moon.

[THE PHANTOM.]

"Come with me, come with me, no longer delay!

"Or else, silly Child, I will drag thee away."

"O Father! O Father! now, now, keep your hold!

"The ERL-KING has seiz'd me—his grasp is so cold."

Sore trembled the Father; he spurr'd thro' the wild,

Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering Child;

He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread;

But, clasp'd to his bosom, the Infant was dead!

THE WATER-KING.

A DANISH BALLAD.

WITH gentle murmur flow'd the tide,
While by the fragrant flow'r'y side,
The lovely Maid, with carols gay,
To Mary's church pursued her way.

The Water-fiend's malignant eye
Along the banks beheld her hie ;
Straight to his Mother-witch he sped,
And thus, in suppliant accents, said ;

“ Oh ! Mother, Mother, now advise
“ How I may yonder Maid surprise ;
“ Oh ! Mother, Mother, now explain
“ How I may yonder Maid obtain.”

The Witch, she gave him armour white,
 She form'd him like a gallant Knight ;
 Of water clear next made her hand
 A steed, whose housings were of sand.

The Water-King then swift he went ;
 To Mary's church his steps he bent ;
 He bound his courser to the door,
 And pac'd the church-yard three-times four.

His courser to the door bound he,
 And pac'd the church-yard four-times three ;
 Then hast'ned up the aisle, where all
 The people flock'd, both great and small.

The Priest said, as the Knight drew near,
 " And wherefore comes the White-chief here ?"
 The lovely Maid, she smil'd aside,
 " Oh ! would I were the White-chief's bride !"

He stepp'd o'er benches one and two ;

" Oh ! lovely Maid, I die for you !"

He stepp'd o'er benches two and three ;

" Oh ! lovely Maiden, go with me !"

Then sweet she smil'd, the lovely Maid,

And while she gave her hand, she said,

" Betide me joy, betide me woe,

" O'er hill, o'er dale, with thee I go."

The Priest their hands together joins :

They dance while clear the moon-beam shines ;

And little thinks the Maiden bright

Her partner is the Water-spright.

Oh ! had some spirit deign'd to sing,

" Your partner is the Water-King !"

The Maid had fear and hate confess'd,

And curs'd the hand which then she press'd.

But nothing giving cause to think
How near she stray'd to danger's brink,
Still on she went, and hand in hand
The lovers reach'd the yellow sand.

"Ascend this steed with me, my dear!
"We needs must cross the streamlet here,
"Ride boldly in, it is not deep;
"The winds are hush'd, the billows sleep."

Thus spoke the Water-King. The Maid
Her traitor bride-groom's wish obey'd:
And soon she saw the courser lave
Delighted in his parent wave.

"Stop! Stop! my love! The waters blue
"E'en now my shrinking foot bedew."
"Oh! lay aside your fears, sweetheart,
"We now have reach'd the deepest part."

"Stop! Stop! my love! For now I see

"The waters rise above my knee."

"Oh! lay aside your fears sweetheart!

"We now have reach'd the deepest part."

"Stop! Stop! for God's sake stop! for, oh!

"The waters o'er my bosom flow."

Scarce were the words pronounc'd, when Knight
And courser vanish'd from her sight.

She shrieks, but shrieks in vain; for high

The wild winds rising dull the cry;

The fiend exults, the billows dash,

And o'er their helpless victim wash.

Three times, while struggling with the stream,

The lovely Maid was heard to scream;

But when the tempest's rage was o'er,

The lovely Maid was seen no more.

Warned by this tale, ye damsels fair,
To whom ye give your love beware!
Believe not every handsome Knight,
And dance not with the Water-spright!

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LORD WILLIAM.

No eye beheld when William plung'd
Young Edmund in the stream ;
No human ear but William's heard
Young Edmund's drowning scream.

Submissive all the vassals own'd
The murd'rer for their Lord,
And he as rightful heir possess'd
The House of Erlingford.

The ancient House of Erlingford
Stood midst a fair domain,
And Severn's ample waters near
Roll'd thro' the fertile plain.

And often the wayfaring man
Would love to linger there,
Forgetful of his onward road,
To gaze on scenes so fair.

But never could Lord William dare
To gaze on Severn's stream,
In every wind that swept its waves,
He heard young Edmund's scream.

In vain, at midnight's silent hour,
Sleep clos'd the murd'rer's eyes,
In ev'ry dream the murd'rer saw
Young Edmund's form arise !

In vain, by restless conscience driv'n,
Lord William left his home,
Far from the scenes that saw his guilt,
In pilgrimage to roam.

To other climes the Pilgrim fled,
 But could not fly despair ;
 He sought his home again, but peace
 Was still a stranger there.

Each hour was tedious long, yet swift
 The months appear'd to roll,
 And now the day return'd that shook
 With terror William's soul.

A day ! that William never felt
 Return without dismay,
 For well had conscience kalendar'd
 Young Edmund's dying day.

A fearful day was that ! the rains
 Fell fast with tempest roar,
 And the swoln tide of Severn spread
 Far on the level shore.

In vain Lord William fought the feast,
 In vain he quaff'd the bowl,
 And strove with noisy mirth to drown
 The anguish of his soul.

The tempest, as its sudden swell
 In gusty howlings came,
 With cold and death-like feelings, seem'd
 To thrill his shudd'ring frame.

Reluctant now, as night came on,
 His lonely couch he prest,
 And wearied out he sunk to sleep—
 To sleep—but not to rest.

Beside that couch his brother's form,
 Lord Edmund, seem'd to stand,
 Such and so pale, as when in death
 He grasp'd his brother's hand.

Such, and so pale his face, as when
 With faint and fault'ring tongue,
 To William's care, a dying charge,
 He left his orphan son.

" I bade thee, with a father's love,
 " My orphan, Edmund, guard ;
 " Well, William, hast thou kept the charge !
 " Now take thy due reward."

He started up, each limb convuls'd
 With agonizing fear ;
 He only heard the storm of night—
 'Twas music to his ear.

When lo ! the voice of loud alarm
 His inmost soul appals—
 " What ho ! Lord William ! rise in haste,
 " The water saps thy walls."

He rose in haste ; beneath the walls
He saw the flood appear ;
It hemm'd him round, 'twas midnight now,
No human aid was near.

He heard the shout of joy, for now
A boat approach'd the wall,
And eager to the welcome aid
They crowd for safety all.

"My boat is small," the boatman cried,
"This dang'rous haste forbear ;
"Wait other aid, this little boat
"But ONE from hence can bear."

Lord William leapt into the boat,
"Haste, haste, to yonder shore !
"And ample wealth shall well reward ;
"Ply swift and strong the oar !"

The boatman plied the oar, the boat
 Went light along the stream ;
 Sudden, Lord William heard a cry,
 Like Edmund's drowning scream !

The boatman paus'd—" Methought I heard
 " A child's distressful cry !"
 "'Twas but the howling of the night,"
 Lord William made reply.

"Haste ! haste ! ply swift and strong the oar,
 "Haste, haste, across the stream !"
 Again Lord William heard a cry,
 Like Edmund's drowning scream !

" I heard a child's distressful scream !"
 The boatman cried again ;
 " Nay, hasten on ! the night is dark,
 " And we should search in vain."

"Oh, God! Lord William! dost thou know

"How dreadful 'tis to die?

"And canst thou without pity hear

"A child's expiring cry!"

"Most horrible it is to sink

"Beneath the chilly stream,

"To stretch the pow'rless arms in vain,

"In vain for help to scream!"

The shriek again was heard, it came

More deep, more piercing loud,

That instant o'er the flood the Moon

Shone through a broken cloud.

And near them they beheld a child,

Upon a crag he stood,

A little crag, and all around

Was spread the rising flood.

The boatman plied the oar, the boat
 Approach'd the resting place,
 The Moon-beam shone upon the child,
 And shew'd how pale his face.

"Now reach thine hand," the boatman cry'd,
 "Lord William reach and save:"
 The child stretch'd forth his little hands
 To grasp the hand he gave.

Then William shrieks! the hand he touch'd
 Was cold, and damp, and dead:
 He felt—young Edmund in his arms!
 A heavier weight than lead.

The boat sunk down, the murd'rer sunk
 Beneath th' avenging stream;
 He rose, he scream'd—no human ear
 HEARD WILLIAM'S DROWNING SCREAM!

POOR MARY,
THE MAID OF THE INN.

BY MR SOUTHEY.

Who is she, the poor Maniac, whose wildly-fix'd eyes
Seem a heart overcharg'd to express?
She weeps not, yet often and deeply she sighs ;
She never complains, but her silence implies
The composure of settled distress.

No aid, no compassion, the maniac will seek,
Cold and hunger awake not her care :
Thro' her rags do the winds of the winter blow bleak
On her poor wither'd bosom half bare, and her cheek
Has the deathly pale hue of despair.

Yet cheerful and happy, nor distant the day,
 Poor Mary the maniac has been ;
The traveller remembers who journey'd this way,
No damsel so lovely, no damsel so gay,
 As Mary the Maid of the Inn.

Her cheerful address fill'd the guests with delight,
 As she welcom'd them in with a smile :
Her heart was a stranger to childish affright,
And Mary would walk by the Abbey at night,
 When the wind whistled down the dark aisle.

She lov'd ; and young Richard had settled the day,
 And she hop'd to be happy for life ;
But Richard was idle and worthless, and they
Who knew him would pity poor Mary, and say,
 That she was too good for his wife.

'Twas in Autumn, and stormy and dark was the night,
 And fast were the windows and door;
 Two guests sat enjoying the fire that burnt bright,
 And smoking in silence with tranquil delight,
 They listen'd to hear the wind roar.

"'Tis pleasant," cried one, seated by the fire-side,
 "To hear the wind whistle without."

"A fine night for the Abbey!" his comrade replied,
 "Methinks a man's courage might now be well tried,
 "Who should wander the ruins about.

"I myself like a school-boy, should tremble to hear
 "The hoarse ivy shake over my head;
 "And could fancy I saw, half persuaded by fear,
 "Some ugly old Abbot's white spirit appear,
 "For this wind might awaken the dead!"

"I'll wager a dinner," the other one cried,

"That Mary would venture there now."

"Then wager and lose!" with a sneer he replied,

"I'll warrant she'd fancy a ghost by her side,

"And faint if she saw a white cow."

"Will Mary this charge on her courage allow?"

His companion exclaim'd with a smile;

"I shall win, for I know she will venture there now,

"And earn a New Bonnet by bringing a Bough,

"From the Elder that grows in the aisle."

With fearless good humour did Mary comply,

And her way to the Abbey she bent;

The night it was dark, and the wind it was high,

And as hollowly howling it swept through the sky,

She shiver'd with cold as she went.

O'er the path so well known still proceeded the Maid,
 Where the Abbey rose dim on the sight ;
 Thro' the gate-way she enter'd, she felt not afraid,
 Yet the ruins were lonely and wild, and their shade
 Seem'd to deepen the gloom of the night.

All around her was silent, save when the rude blast
 Howl'd dismally round the old pile ;
 Over weed-cover'd fragments still fearless she past,
 And arriv'd at the innermost ruin at last,
 Where the Elder-tree grew in the aisle.

Well pleas'd did she reach it, and quickly drew near,
 And hastily gather'd the Bough :
 When the sound of a voice seem'd to rise on her ear—
 She paus'd, and she listen'd, all eager to hear,
 And her heart panted fearfully now !

The wind blew, the hoarse ivy shook over her head :

She listen'd—nought else could she hear.

The wind ceas'd, her heart sunk in her bosom with dread,

For she heard in the ruins distinctly the tread

Of footsteps approaching her near.

Behind a wide column, half breathless with fear,

She crept to conceal herself there :

That instant the Moon o'er a dark cloud shone clear,

And she saw in the Moon-light two ruffians appear,

And between them a CORPSE did they bear !

Then Mary could feel her heart-blood curdled cold !

Again the rough wind hurried by—

It blew off the Hat of the one ; and behold !

Even close to the feet of poor Mary it roll'd—

She felt—and expected to die.

"Curse the Hat! (he exclaims) nay, come on, and first hide

"The dead body," his comrade replies.

She beheld them in safety pass on by her side,

She seizes the Hat, fear her courage supplied,

And fast through the Abbey she flies.

She ran with wild speed, she rush'd in at the door,

She gaz'd horribly eager around,

Then her limbs could support their faint burden no more,

And exhausted and breathless she sunk on the floor,

Unable to utter a sound.

Ere yet her pale lips could the story impart,

For a moment the HAT met her view ;

Her eyes from that object convulsively start,

For, O God! what cold horror then thrill'd thro' her heart,

When the name of her Richard she knew !

Where the old Abbey stands, on the common hard by,

HIS GIBBET IS NOW TO BE SEEN.

Not far from the road it engages the eye,

The traveller beholds it, and thinks with a sigh

Of Poor Mary the Maid of the Inn.

THE CHASE.

EARL WALTER winds his bugle horn ;
To horse, to horse, halloo, halloo !
His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
And thronging serfs their Lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake ;
While answering hound, and horn, and steed,
The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallow'd day
Had painted yonder spire with gold,
And, calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep, the bell had toll'd,

But still Earl Walter onward rides ;
 Halloo, halloo, and hark again !
 When, spurring from opposing sides,
 Two stranger horsemen join the train.

Who was each stranger, left and right,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell :
 The right-hand steed was silver white,
 The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand horseman, young and fair,
 His smile was like the morn of May ;
 The left, from eye of tawny glare,
 Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He wav'd his huntsman's cap on high,
 Cry'd, " Welcome, welcome, noble Lord !
 " What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
 " To match the princely chase, afford ?

"Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,"

Cry'd the fair youth, with silver voice ;

"And for Devotion's choral swell

"Exchange the rude discordant noise.

"To-day, th' ill-omen'd chase forbear ;

"Yon bell yet summons to the fane :

"To-day, the warning spirit hear,

"To-morrow, thou may'st mourn in vain."

"Away, and sweep the glades along !"

The sable hunter hoarse replies ;

"To muttering Monks leave matin song,

"And bells, and books, and mysteries."

Earl Walter spurr'd his ardent steed,

And, launching forward with a bound,

"Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,

"Would leave the jovial horn and hound ?

“No! pious fool, I scorn thy lore ;
 “Let him who ne’er the chase durst prove,
 “Go join with thee the droning choir,
 “And leave me to the sport I love.”

Fast, fast Earl Walter onward rides,
 O’er moss and moor, o’er holt and hill,
 And onward fast on either side,
 The stranger horsemen follow’d still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
 A stag more white than mountain snow;
 And louder rung Earl Walter’s horn,
 “Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!”

A heedless wretch has cross’d the way—
 He gasps the thundering hoofs below;
 But, live who can, or die who may,
 Still forward, forward! On they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
A field with Autumn's blessings crown'd ;
See, prostrate at Earl Walter's feet,
A husbandman with toil embrown'd.

"O mercy ! mercy ! noble Lord ;
"Spare the hard pittance of the poor,
"Earn'd by the sweat these brows have pour'd
"In scorching July's sultry hour."

Earnest the right-hand stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey :
Th' impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound, so basely born,
"Or dread the scourge's echoing blow !"
Then loudly rung his bugle horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho !"

So said, so done—a single bound
 Clears the poor labourer's humble pale :
 Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
 Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man, and horse, and hound, and horn,
 Destructive sweep the field along,
 While joying o'er the wasted corn,
 Fell Famine marks the madd'ning throng.

Again up rous'd, the tim'rous prey
 Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill ;
 Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
 And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appear'd ;
 He seeks the shelter of the crowd ;
 Amid the flock's domestic herd
 His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
 His track the steady blood-hounds trace ;
 O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
 Th' unwearied Earl pursues the chase.

The anxious herdsman lowly falls ;
 " O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
 " These herds, a widow's little all,
 " These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care."

Earnest the right-hand stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey ;
 No prayer nor pity Walter heeds,
 But furious keeps the onward way.

" Unmanner'd dog ! To stop my sport
 " Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
 " Though human spirits of thy sort
 " Were tenants of these carrion kine !"

Again he winds his bugle horn,
 "Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"
 And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
 He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;
 Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;
 The murd'rous cries the stag appal,
 Again he starts, new-nerv'd by fear.

With blood besmear'd, and white with foam,
 While big the tears of anguish pour,
 He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
 The humble hermit's hut obscure.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
 Fast rattling on his traces go;
 The sacred chapel rung around
 With hark away, and holla, ho!

All mild, amid the route profane,

The holy hermit pour'd his pray'r :

"Forbear with blood God's house to stain,

"Revere his altar, and forbear !

"The meanest brute has rights to plead,

"Which, wrong'd by cruelty or pride,

"Draw vengeance on the ruthless head ;—

"Be warn'd, at length, and turn aside."

Still the fair horseman anxious pleads,

The black, wild whooping, points the prey ;

Alas ! the Earl no warning heeds,

But frantic keeps the forward way.

"Holy or not, or right or wrong,

"Thy altar and its rites I spurn ;

"Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,

"Not God himself shall make me turn."

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,

“Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!”

But off—on whirlwind’s pinions borne,

The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,

And clamour of the chase was gone :

For hoofs and howls, and bugle sound,

A deadly silence reign’d alone.

Wild gaz’d th’ affrighted Earl around ;—

He strove in vain to wake his horn,

In vain to call ; for not a sound

Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds ;

No distant baying reach’d his ears ;

His courser, rooted to the ground,

The quick’ning spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker round it spreads,
 Dark as the darkness of the grave;
 And not a sound the still invades,
 Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinners humbled head,
 At length the solemn silence broke;
 And from a cloud of swarthy red,
 The awful voice of thunder spoke.

“Oppressor of creation fair!
 “Apostate spirits’ harden’d tool!
 “Scorner of God! scourge of the poor!
 “The measure of thy cup is full.

“Go, hunt for ever through the wood,
 “For ever roam th’ affrighted wild;
 “And let thy fate instruct the proud,
 “God’s meanest creature is his child.”

'Twas hush'd: one flash of sombre glare
With yellow ting'd the forest brown;
Up rose Earl Walter's bristling hair,
And horror chill'd each nerve and bone.

Cold pour'd the sweat in freezing rill:
A rising wind began to sing;
And louder, louder, louder still,
Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

The earth is rock'd, it quakes, it rends;
From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
Mix'd with sulphureous flames, ascend
The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly huntsman next arose,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell!
His eye, like midnight lightning glows,
His steed, the swarthy hue of hell.

Earl Walter flies o'er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe ;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And hark away, and holla, ho !

With wild despair's reverted eye,
Close, close behind, he marks the throng,
With bloody fangs, and eager cry !
In frantic fear he scours along,

Still shall the dreadful chase endure,
Till time itself shall have an end ;
By day, earth's tortured womb they scour,
At midnight's witching hour ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the lated peasant hears ;
Appal'd he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
 For human pride, for human woe,
 When at his midnight mass he hears
 Th' infernal cry of holla, ho!

WILLIAM AND HELEN.

FROM heavy dreams fair Helen rose
And ey'd the dawning red :
"Alas, my love, thou tarriest long !
"O art thou false or dead?"

With gallant Fred'rick's princely power
He sought the bold crusade ;
But not a word from Judah's wars
Told Helen how he sped.

With Paynim and with Saracen
At length a truce was made,
And ev'ry Knight return'd to dry
The tears his love had shed.

Our gallant host was homeward bound
 With many a song of joy ;
 Green wav'd the laurel in each plume,
 The badge of victory.

And old and young, and sire and son,
 To meet them crowd the way,
 With shouts, and mirth, and melody,
 The debt of love to pay.

Full many a maid her true love met,
 And sobb'd in his embrace,
 And flutt'ring joy in tears and smiles
 Array'd full many a face.

Nor joy nor smile for Helen sad ;
 She sought the host in vain ;
 For none could tell her William's fate,
 If faithless, or if slain.

The martial band is past and gone ;
She rends her raven hair,
And in distraction's bitter mood
She weeps with wild despair.

" O ! rise my child," her mother said,
" Nor sorrow thus in vain ;
" A perjur'd lover's fleeting heart
" No tears recal again.

" O mother, what is gone, is gone,
" What's lost, for ever lorn :
" Death, death alone can comfort me ;
" O had I ne'er been born !

" O break, my heart, O break at once !
" Drink my life-blood despair !
" No joy remains on earth for me,
" For me in heaven no share."

"O enter not in judgment, Lord!"

The pious mother prays;

"Impute not guilt to thy frail child!"

"She knows not what she says.

"O say thy pater noster child!

"O turn to God and grace!

"His will that turn'd thy bliss to bale

"Can change thy bale to bliss."

"O mother, mother! What is bliss?

"O mother, what is bale?

"My William's love was heaven on earth,

"Without it earth is hell.

"Why should I pray to ruthless heav'n

"Since my lov'd William's slain?

"I only pray'd for William's sake,

"And all my pray'rs were vain."

"O take the sacrament, my child,
"And check these tears that flow;
"By resignation's humble pray'r,
"O hallow'd be thy woe!"

"No sacrament can quench this fire,
"Or slake this scorching pain:
"No sacrament can bid the dead
"Arise and live again."

"O break, my heart, O break at once!
"Be thou my god, Despair!
"Heav'n's heaviest blow has fall'n on me,
"And vain each fruitless pray'r."

"O enter not in judgment, Lord,
"With thy frail child of clay!
"She knows not what her tongue has spoke;
"Impute it not, I pray!"

"Forbear, my child, this desp'rate woe,

"And turn to God and grace ;

"Well can devotion's heav'nly glow

"Convert thy bale to bliss."

"O mother, mother, what is bliss ?

"O mother, what is bale ?

"Without my William, what were heav'n,

"Or with him, what were hell !"

Wild she arraigns th' eternal doom,

Upbraids each sacred pow'r,

Till spent, she sought her silent room,

All in the lonely tower.

She beat her breast, she wrung her hands,

Till sun and day were o'er,

And through the glimm'ring lattice shone

The twinkling of the star.

Then crash ! the heavy draw-bridge fell,
 That o'er the moat was hung ;
 And clatter ! clatter ! on its boards
 The hoof of courser rung.

The clank of echoing steel was heard,
 As off the rider bounded ;
 And slowly on the winding stair,
 A heavy footstep sounded.

And hark ! and hark ! a knock—Tap ! tap !
 A rustling stifled noise ;
 Door latch and tinkling staples ring—
 At length a whisp'ring voice.

“ Awake, awake, arise my love !
 “ How, Helen, dost thou fare ?
 “ Wak'st thou, or sleep'st ? laugh'st thou, or weep'st ?
 “ Hast thought on me my fair ?”

“ My love ! my love !—so late by night !—

“ I wak'd, I wept for thee ;

“ Much have I borne since dawn of morn ;—

“ Where, William, could'st thou be ?”

“ We saddled late—From Hungary

“ I rode since darkness fell ;

“ And to its bourne we both return,

“ Before the matin bell.”

“ O rest this night within my arms,

“ And warm thee in their fold !

“ Chill howls through hawthorn bush the wind ;—

“ My love is deadly cold.”

“ Let the wind howl through hawthorn bush !

“ This night we must away ;

“ The steed is wight, the spur is bright,

“ I cannot stay till day.

"Busk, busk, and boune ! Thou mount'st behind

"Upon my black barb steed :

"O'er stock and stile, a hundred miles,

"We haste to bridal bed."

"To-night—to-night a hundred miles !

"O dearest William, stay !

"The bell strikes twelve—dark, dismal hour !

"O wait, my love, till day !"

"Look here, look here—the moon shines clear—

"Full fast I ween we ride ;

"Mount and away ! for ere the day,

"We reach our bridal bed.

"The black barb snorts, the bridle rings ;

"Haste, busk, and boune, and seat thee !

"The feast is made, the chamber spread,

"The bridal guests await thee."

Strong love prevail'd : She busks, she bounes,
 She mounts the barb behind,
 And round her darling William's waist
 Her lily arms she twin'd.

And hurry ! hurry ! off they rode,
 As fast as fast might be ;
 Spurn'd from the courser's thundering heels
 The flashing pebbles flee.

And on the right, and on the left,
 Ere they could snatch a view,
 Fast, fast, each mountain, mead, and plain,
 And cot and castle flew.

" Sit fast—dost fear?—The moon shines clear—"
 " Fleet rides my barb—keep hold !"
 " Fear'st thou ?" " O no !" she faintly said ;
 " But why so stern and cold ?"

"What yonder rings? what yonder sings?

"Why shrieks the owlet gray?"

"'Tis death bells clang, 'tis funeral song,

"The body to the clay.

"With song and clang, at morrow's dawn,

"Ye may inter the dead:

"To-night I ride, with my young bride,

"To deck our bridal bed.

"Come with thy choir, thou coffin'd guest,

"To swell our nuptial song!

"Come priest, to bless our marriage feast!

"Come all, come all along!"

Ceas'd clang and song; down sunk the bier;

The shrouded corpse arose:

And hurry! hurry! all the train

The thund'ring steed pursues.

And forward ! forward ! on they go ;
 High snorts the straining steed ;
 Thick pants the rider's labouring breath,
 As headlong on they speed.

“ O William ! why this savage haste ?
 “ And where thy bridal bed ? ”
 “ 'Tis distant far. ” “ Still short and stern ? ”
 “ 'Tis narrow, trustless maid. ”

“ No room for me ? ” “ Enough for both ;—
 “ Speed, speed, my barb, thy course. ”
 O'er thund'ring bridge, through boiling surge,
 He drove the furious horse.

Tramp ! tramp ! along the land they rode ;
 Splash ! splash ! along the sea ;
 The steed is wight, the spur is bright,
 The flashing pebbles flee.

Fled past on right and left how fast
Each forest, grove and bower ;
On right and left fled past how fast
Each city, town and tower.

“ Dost fear ? dost fear ?—The moon shines clear ;

“ Dost fear to ride with me ?—

“ Hurrah ! hurrah ! The dead can ride !”

“ O William let them be !

“ See there, see there ! What yonder swings

“ And creaks 'mid whistling rain ?”

“ Gibbet and steel, th' accursed wheel ;

“ A murd'rer in his chain.

“ Hollo ! thou felon, follow here :

“ To bridal bed we ride ;

“ And thou shalt prance a fetter dance

“ Before me and my bride.”

And hurry, hurry ! clash, clash, clash !

The wasted form descends ;

And fleet as wind through hazel bush

The wild career attends.

Tramp ! tramp ! along the land they rode,

Splash ! splash ! along the sea ;

The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,

The flashing pebbles flee.

How fled what moonshine faintly show'd !

How fled what darkness hid !

How fled the earth beneath their feet,

The heav'ns above their head !

“ Dost fear ? dost fear ? The moon shines clear,

“ And well the dead can ride !

“ Does faithful Helen fear for them ?”

“ O leave in peace the dead !”

" Barb ! Barb ! methinks I hear the cock :

" The sand will soon be run :

" Barb ! Barb ! I smell the morning air ;

" The race is well nigh done."

Tramp ! tramp ! along the land they rode,

Splash ! splash ! along the sea ;

The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,

The flashing pebbles flee.

" Hurrah ! hurrah ! well ride the dead ;

" The bride, the bride is come !

" And soon we reach the bridal bed,

" For, Helen, here's my home."

Reluctant on its rusty hinge

Revolv'd an iron door,

And by the pale moon's setting beam

Were seen a church and tow'r.

With many a shriek and cry whiz round
 The birds of midnight, scared ;
 And rustling like autumnal leaves
 Unhallow'd ghosts were heard.

O'er many a tomb and tomb-stone pale
 He spurr'd the fiery horse,
 Till sudden at an open grave
 He check'd the wond'rous course.

The falling gauntlet quits the rein,
 Down drops the casque of steel,
 The cuirass leaves his shrinking side,
 The spur his gory heel.

The eyes desert the naked skull,
 The mould'ring flesh the bone,
 Till Helen's lily arms entwine
 A ghastly skeleton !

The furious barb snorts fire and foam,
And with a fearful bound,
Dissolves at once in empty air,
And leaves her on the ground.

Half seen by fits, by fits half heard,
Pale spectres fleet along ;
Wheel round the maid in dismal dance,
And howl the fun'ral song.

"E'en when the heart's with anguish cleft,
"Revere the doom of Heav'n.
"Her soul is from her body reft ;
"Her spirit be forgiv'n !"

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ALONZO THE BRAVE

AND

FAIR IMOGINE.

A WARRIOR so bold, and a virgin so bright,
Convers'd as they sat on the green ;
They gazed on each other with tender delight ;
Alonzo the Brave was the name of the knight,
The maid's was the Fair Imogine.

" And, oh !" said the youth, " since to-morrow I go
" To fight in a far distant land,
" Your tears for my absence soon leaving to flow,
" Some other will court you, and you will bestow
" On a wealthier suitor your hand."

"Oh! hush these suspicions," Fair Imogine said,

"Offensive to love and to me!

"For, if you be living, or if you be dead,

"I swear by the Virgin, that none in your stead

"Shall husband of Imogine be.

"If e'er I, by lust or by wealth led aside,

"Forget my Alonzo the Brave,

"God grant, that, to punish my falsehood and pride,

"Your ghost at the marriage may sit by my side,

"May tax me with perjury, claim me as bride,

"And bear me away to the grave!"

To Palestine hastened the hero so bold;

His love, she lamented him sore:

But scarce had a twelvemonth elapsed, when behold,

A Baron, all covered with jewels and gold,

Arrived at Fair Imogine's door.

His treasure, his presents, his spacious domain,
 Soon made her untrue to her vows :
 He dazzled her eyes ; he bewilder'd her brain ;
 He caught her affections so light and so vain,
 And carried her home as his spouse.

And now had the marriage been blest by the priest ;
 The revelry now was begun :
 The tables they groan'd with the weight of the feast ;
 Nor yet had the laughter and merriment ceased,
 When the bell of the castle told—ONE !

Then first with amazement Fair Imogine found
 That a stranger was placed by her side :
 His air was terrific ; he uttered no sound ;
 He spoke not, he moved not, he looked not around,
 But earnestly gazed on the bride.

His vizor was closed, and gigantic his height ;

His armour was sable to view :

All pleasure and laughter were hushed at his sight ;

The dogs as they eyed him drew back in affright ;

The lights in the chamber burned blue !

His presence all bosoms appeared to dismay ;

The guests sat in silence and fear.

At length spoke the bride, while she trembled, "I pray,

"Sir Knight, that your helmet aside you would lay,

"And deign to partake of our cheer."

The lady is silent : the stranger complies :

His vizor he slowly unclosed :

Oh ! God ! what a sight met Fair Imogine's eyes !

What words can express her dismay and surprise,

When a skeleton's head was exposed !

All present then uttered a terrified shout ;

All turned with disgust from the scene.

The worms they crept in, and the worms they crept out,
And sported his eyes and his temples about,

While the spectre addressed Imogine :

“ Behold me, thou false one ! behold me ! ” he cried ;

“ Remember Alonzo the Brave !

“ God grants, that, to punish thy falsehood and pride,

“ My Ghost at thy marriage SHALL sit by thy side,

“ SHALL tax thee with perjury, claim thee as bride,

“ And bear thee away to the grave ! ”

Thus saying, his arms round the lady he wound,

While loudly she shrieked in dismay ;

Then sank with his prey thro’ the wide-yawning ground :

Nor ever again was Fair Imogine found,

Or the spectre who bore her away.

Not long lived the Baron : and none since that time
 To inhabit the Castle presume ;
 For chronicles tell, that by order sublime,
 There Imogine suffers the pain of her crime,
 And mourns her deplorable doom.

At midnight, four times in each year, does her spright,
 When mortals in slumber are bound,
 Arrayed in her bridal apparel of white,
 Appear in the hall with the Skeleton-Knight,
 And shriek as he whirls her round.

While they drink out of skulls newly torn from the grave,
 Dancing round them pale spectres are seen :
 Their liquor is blood, and this horrible stave
 They howl :—" To the health of Alonzo the Brave,
 " And his consort, the False Imogine !"

ARTHUR AND MATILDA.

BRIGHT shone the stars, the moon was sunk,
And gently blew the breeze,
As homeward bound the stately ship
Rode o'er the Indian seas.

High on the poop, in lonely watch,
Young Arthur pensive stood,
And eyed the quiv'ring light of Heav'n
Reflected in the flood.

But many and many a league his thoughts
O'er land and water roam ;
They fly to Britain's distant isle,
To dear Matilda's home.

His busy fancy paints the Fair,
 Array'd in all her charms ;
 He tastes the kiss of sweet return,
 And folds her in his arms.

Till waken'd from his rapturous dream,
 He hears the flapping sails,
 And chides, with fond impatience stung,
 The tardy-winged gales.

“ O waft me some kind pow'r,” he cried,
 “ With speed to Britain's shore ;
 “ Placed by the side of her I love,
 “ I'd ask of Fate no more !

“ Blow, blow ye slumbering winds ! ye sails,
 “ Catch every fleeting breath ;
 “ The stormy blast with danger swells,
 “ But this delay is death.”

Then, as across the watery waste,
 He bent his cheerless eyes,
 From out the gloom a whitening form,
 Dim-seen, appear'd to rise.

Swift-gliding on the sight it grew ;
 And now in prospect plain,
 A little Boat was seen to come
 Self moved athwart the main.

And in the stern in glistening white,
 A maiden sat to guide ;
 Right to the ship she steer'd her course,
 And soon was at the side.

Young Arthur, speechless with amaze,
 Beheld the wond'rous sight,
 And seem'd a well-known face to view,
 That shone with paly light.

With beating heart and mind disturbed,
 He gazed upon the maid,
 Who upward turn'd an eager look,
 And "Know'st me not?" she said.

"O'er ocean wide, thro' dashing waves,
 "Behold Matilda come,
 "To meet her Arthur on his way,
 "And bear him to her home :

"A home unblest, forlorn, and dark,
 "Whilst thou art absent still ;
 "A narrow house, but yet a place
 "Is left for thee to fill.

"Long, long enough, with bitter pangs,
 "My faithful breast was torn ;
 "Long, long enough, in sad despair,
 "I only liv'd to mourn :

"But now 'tis o'er!—Again we meet,

"But not again to part:

"Come then, descend, embark with me,

"And trust thy pilot's art.

"Ere star-light yields to morning dawn,

"A thousand leagues we sail,

"I care not how the current runs,

"Or which way blows the gale."

"What may this mean!" With falt'ring voice,

The trembling Arthur cried:

"But if Matilda calls! I come,

"Whatever may betide."

Then o'er the ship's tall side he sprung,

His promis'd bride to meet;

She drew beneath her little boat,

To stay his tottering feet.

“ Now touch me not ! but distant sit,

“ And trim the boat with heed.”

The youth obey'd ; she turn'd the helm,

The vessel flew with speed.

“ How pale and wan thy face, my love !

“ How sunk and dead thine eyes !

“ And sure some corpses winding sheet

“ Thy cloak and hood supplies !”

“ My face may well be pale, my love !

“ The night is dark and cold ;

“ And closer than a winding sheet,

“ What garment can enfold ?”

No more could Arthur speak ; for fear

And wonder froze his blood :

He wildly eyed Matilda now,

And now the foaming flood.

In awful silence, all the night,
 They bounded o'er the tide ;
 The boat ran rippling thro' the brine,
 That foam'd on either side.

At length the stars began to fade,
 Down in the western sky,
 When dim the land appear'd in view,
 With cliffs o'erhung on high.

Straight for the shore the pilot maid
 Steer'd on her venturous bark,
 Where rugged rocks, with hideous yawn,
 Disclos'd a cavern dark.

They enter :—Arthur shook with dread,
 And “ Whither now ? ” he cried :
 “ Peace ! peace ! our voyage is near its end,”
 Her echoing voice replied.

Within the bowels of the ground,
 They plung'd in blackest night;
 Yet still Matilda's ghastly form
 Was seen in blueish light.

The boat now touch'd the further shore,
 When straight uprose the maid:
 "Now follow, youth! my home is nigh:"
 The shuddering youth obey'd.

A narrow winding path they take,
 Drops trickling over head:
 He sees her light before him glide,
 But cannot hear her tread.

At last, they come where mould'ring bones
 Lie strew'd in heaps around,
 And opening vaults on either side
 Gape in the hollow ground:

And coffins, rang'd in sable rows,
 By glimm'ring light appear ;
 Matilda stopt, and wav'd her hand,
 And said, " MY HOME IS HERE."

" If thou Matilda's house wilt share,
 " Behold the narrow space ;
 " Then welcome youth ! now truly mine,
 " And take a bride's embrace !"

Young Arthur stretch'd his doubtful arms
 To meet the clasping maid ;
 When lo ! instead of fleshly shape,
 He grasp'd an empty shade !

The life blood left his fluttering heart,
 Cold dew's his face bespread,
 Convulsive struggles shook his frame—
 And all the vision fled !

THE ERL-KING's

DAUGHTER.

O'ER hills and through forests Sir Oluf he wends,
To bid to his wedding relations and friends :
'Tis late, and arriving where sports the elf-band,
The Erl-King's proud daughter presents him her hand.

"Now welcome, Sir Oluf! Oh! welcome to me!

"Come, enter our circle my partner to be."

"Fair lady, nor can I dance with you, nor may :

"To-morrow I marry, to-night must away."

"Now listen, Sir Oluf! Oh! listen to me!

"Two spurs of fine steel will I give unto thee ;

"A shirt too of satin receive as thy boon,

"Which my Queen-mother bleach'd in the light of the moon.

"Then yield thee, Sir Oluf! Oh! yield thee to me,

"And enter our circle my partner to be."

"Fair lady, nor can I dance with you, nor may:

"To-morrow I marry, to-night must away."

"Now listen, Sir Oluf! Oh! listen to me!

"An helmet of gold will I give unto thee."

"An helmet of gold would I willingly take,

"But I will not dance with you for Urgola's sake."

"And deigns not Sir Oluf my partner to be?

"Then curses and sickness I give unto thee;

"Then curses and sickness thy steps shall pursue:

"Now hence to thy lady, thou lover so true!"

Thus said she, and laid her charm'd hand on his heart;

Oh! never Sir Oluf had felt such a smart!

Swift spurr'd he his steed till he reach'd his own door,

And there stood his mother the castle before.

“ Now riddle me, Oluf, and riddle me right,

“ Why look'st thou, my dearest, so wan and so white ?”

“ How should I not, mother, look wan and look white ?

“ I have seen the Erl-King's cruel daughter to-night.

“ She cursed me, her hand to my bosom she prest :

“ Death followed the touch, and now tortures my breast :

“ She cursed me, and said—To thy lady now ride !

“ But ne'er shall my lips kiss the lips of my bride !”

“ Now riddle me, Oluf, and what shall I say,

“ When here comes the lady so fair and so gay ?”

“ Oh ! say, I am gone for a while to the wood,

“ To prove if my hounds and my courser be good.”

Scarce dead was Sir Oluf, and scarce shone the day,

When in came the lady, so fair and so gay,

And in came her father, and in came each guest,

Whom the hapless Sir Oluf had bade to the feast.

They drank the red wine, and they ate the good cheer,
"Oh! where is Sir Oluf? Oh! where is my dear?"
"Sir Oluf is gone for a while to the wood,
"To prove if his hounds and his courser be good."

Then trembled the lady so fair and so gay :
She eyed the black curtain, she drew it away :
But soon from her bosom for ever life fled,
For there lay Sir Oluf, pale, breathless, and dead.

F I N I S.